



Strategic Studies Institute Newsletter

December 2002



New Publications:

Please see our website for a list of all publications. To request any SSI publication, contact the Office of Publications, Ms. Rita Rummel.

[Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy](#), by Dr. Stephen Biddle. Neither the bravery of U.S. special operations forces nor the sophistication of our PGMs can ensure an Afghan-like collapse in a resolute future opponent. (Available only on SSI Website at this time.)

[Colombia's Conflicts: The Spillover Effects of a Wider War](#), by Dr. Richard L. Millett. Colombia, a paradigm of a failing state, has enormous implications for U.S. foreign policy and military asset management.

Upcoming Publications:

Plan Colombia: Reality of the Colombian Crisis and Implications for Hemispheric Security, by Professor Luz Nagle. What will it take to reach U.S. and Colombian objectives in the "Drug War"?

South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balances and Alliances, edited by Dr. Michael R. Chambers. This conference volume looks 18 years forward and examines trends and issues in the region.

Recent Publications:

[Transformation Concepts for National Security in the 21st Century](#), edited by Dr. Williamson Murray.

[Dragon on Terrorism: Assessing China's Tactical Gains and Strategic Losses Post-September 11](#), by Mr. Mohan Malik.

[Growing U.S. Security Interests in Central Asia](#), by Dr. Elizabeth Wishnick.

[European Adaptation to Expeditionary Warfare: Implications for the U.S. Army](#), by Dr. Andrew Dorman.

Upcoming Conferences:

2003 Annual Strategy Conference. The 2003 U.S. Army War College Annual Strategy Conference will be held April 8-10 2003 at Carlisle Barracks. Its theme is ***“The ‘New’ American Way of War: Transforming Military Strategy.”*** The keynote speaker will be Dr. Russell F. Weigley, Distinguished University Professor of History, Temple University. Among his books are: *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*; *Eisenhower’s Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany, 1944-1945*; *The Age of Battles: The Quest for Decisive Warfare from Breitenfeld to Waterloo*; and *A Great Civil War: A Military and Political History, 1861-1865*.

The 2003 Annual Strategy Conference will bring together top thinkers from the policymaking community, academia, the media, and the military to help frame the vital questions and offer insights on America’s emerging approach to the strategic environment.

In addition to the keynote address by Dr. Weigley, the conference will feature a number of panel discussions. These include:

- “The American Way of War: Alternative Views”
- “The ‘New’ American Way of War & the NSS/NMS”
- “The Road Ahead: Defense Transformation & the ‘New’ American Way of War”
- “The Past as Prelude to the Future: Has Tomorrow Arrived?”

Suggestions or Inquiries from those working in the field of U.S. national security organization should be addressed to either LTC Raymond A. Millen, email: <mailto:Raymond.Millen@carlisle.army.mil> or to LTC Antulio Echevarria, email: <mailto:Antulio.Echevarria@carlisle.army.mil>

To register or for additional information, please contact Ms. Donna March at (717) 245-3133. Email: <mailto:DonnaMarch@carlisle.army.mil> . The January SSI Newsletter will include a link to the conference webpage for online registration.

OP-ED

Cutting Headquarters and Staffs Hinders War Efforts

Conrad Crane

In his important book, *Command in War*, Martin Van Creveld describes how the needs and requirements for military staffs have increased as warfare has become more complex. Processing a continually expanding wealth of information and managing a complex set of specialties and skills demand large and competent headquarters. Yet a persistent trend of contemporary American peacetime military reform has been to try to significantly reduce staffs and headquarters. For example, in its 2000 Defense Authorization Act, Congress ordered the Department of Defense to trim fifteen percent

of its headquarters staffs by the end of 2002. Such activities ignore the evolution of the means of waging warfare Van Creveld so capably analyzes, and produce dangerous command and control deficiencies once combat commences.

This has been painfully evident in the current global war against terrorism, which has prompted the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense to question whether they can carry out Congress' mandated reductions. During the 1990s the personnel requirements for many headquarters had already been cut, and then their strength was lowered even further by keeping them at minimum authorized levels of manning, with numerous positions recognized as required for war, but not authorized in peacetime. The situation was made even worse as the world has gotten increasingly complex since the end of the Cold War, adding more missions and responsibilities to higher headquarters without increasing the number of personnel to perform them. These trends were especially evident for theater level commands and components.

When war starts, such undermanned organizations must then scramble to fill needs from subordinate organizations and reserve call-ups. For example, when it became evident that the response to September 11th would require extensive operations in the CENTCOM area of responsibility, that headquarters tasked its component commands for staff personnel to fill all authorizations plus expanded wartime needs. Units such as Third Army, which were required to reinforce CENTCOM, then tasked tactical units such as XVIIIth Airborne Corps for fillers, which in turn had to get augmentation from combat divisions. In many cases reservists, who lacked the proper experience, education, or training, were called on to fill important staff positions, and their utility was further degraded by limitations on their periods of deployment. Because of the truly worldwide aspects of this new war, similar stresses have occurred in many combatant commands, exacerbating staff shortages and turmoil even more.

The result is that the Army and other services have ended up "playing the Super Bowl with a pickup team." The same observation was made about operations in the Balkans. Efficient staffs must be fully qualified, well trained, and used to operating together. The concept advanced by some reformers to maintain permanent 55 person standing Joint Task Force headquarters in theaters might help with some of this problem, but that size is probably too small, and if the new organization gets its strength by gutting other headquarters, problems will only increase.

No organization is perfect, and probably some limited personnel efficiencies can be found in any headquarters. However, it is time to recognize the essential role that staffs play in modern war, and that they must be given adequate personnel requirements and then kept fully manned and trained in peacetime. The war on terrorism has displayed a future of widespread simultaneous operations with reduced time for planning and buildup. Agile and competent staff teams are more important than ever for military success. Without them, especially at the higher levels, it will be impossible to properly employ those superb combat units that have received the preponderance of attention and resources.